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LETTER DATED 30 JANUARY 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose a letter by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Mate Granic, dated 29 January 1994.

I would appreciate if you could provide for the circulation of the enclosed letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ambassador Dr. Mario NOBILO
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 29 January 1994 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia addressed to the President of the Security Council

It is with a great deal of concern and regret that I received information regarding the letter addressed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mr. Haris Silajdzic, to the Security Council accusing Croatia of "military intervention" against the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Republic of Croatia has recently offered the Bosniak-Moslem side a very comprehensive and detailed peace plan, in a sincere effort to achieve a firm, viable and lasting solution to the crisis. As you have probably been informed, this peace proposal begins with a cease-fire and goes as far as proposing readiness for a de facto confederation between the two sides. An agreement opening the way to such a proposal had been reached and signed by the two sides in Geneva on 14 September 1993, as an annex to the public Joint Declaration.

This latest peace proposal was put on the table during the Croat-Moslem negotiations in Bonn-Petersberg and further elaborated and reconsidered in the course of the recent ICFY talks in Geneva. The Bosniak-Moslem side has in the meantime come up with a counter-proposal which is being carefully studied by my Government.

Therefore, my Government must express its surprise over the fact that the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina has chosen this particular moment to raise such unfounded accusations.

It seems highly illogical and inappropriate that the Republic of Croatia, while actually proposing and promoting a peaceful settlement, should during the most crucial stage of the negotiations to end the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina undertake a military offensive, let alone resort to an open military intervention from the outside as suggested by Mr. Silajdzic's letter.

Further, such a move would be highly inconsistent with and would go counter to the policies of my Government. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Council of the three parallel initiatives which Croatian Government currently promotes: a) normalization of relations with the Bosniak-Moslems as elaborated in the document proposed by the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudman, in Bonn-Petersberg; b) gradual steps designed to lead to normalization, confidence-building and mutual recognition with the FRY and peaceful reintegration of the UNPAs in accordance with all the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, CSCE (S/1994/59) documents, as well as the ICFY documents, including the Badinter Commission rulings; c) negotiations with the Republic of Slovenia on very close and consistent cooperation in the negotiations concerning the matters of succession of the former SFR of Yugoslavia.

My Government addressed the Security Council on several occasions emphasizing that the Bosnian Croat side is the weakest and the least numerous

party in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and exposed to the ongoing military attacks and offensive by the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina (S/26146; S/26715; S/26835; S/26919). Different and independent sources could as well easily confirm that there is no offensive against the Moslem areas being launched by the forces of the Croatian Defense Council (HVO). On the contrary, Croatian areas particularly in Central Bosnia and around Zepce have been under constant and ruthless attacks by the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Army of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina has not even respected the tripartite Christmas cease-fire.

Among other things, this makes the Croats the greatest victim of the aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the moment and raises the question of the Government and the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina being actually involved in a war against its own citizens of a different nationality or ethnic roots.

UNPROFOR reports did not confirm accusations by the Bosnian Government concerning "military intervention" by the Croatian Army. On the contrary, UNPROFOR reported that there is no evidence of a major Croatian Army inflow at this moment. In the light of these objective facts, Prime Minister Silajdzic's accusations have to be considered unfounded. To a certain degree they resemble a statement made several weeks ago by another official of the Bosnian Government amounting to a charge that, as part of the UNPROFOR contingent in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the British troops had been a party to the genocide against the Bosnian people.

As to the number of troops being mentioned in the letter (30,000 regular army troops), one must conclude that, were such allegations true, the military situation in Central Bosnia and Posavina would be totally different. The Republic of Croatia could not afford the luxury nor does it have the resources, even if willing to do so, to deploy that many troops in another country while at the same time being faced with the foreign aggression and occupation of the parts of its own territory.

On top of that, most of the units alleged to belong to the Croatian Army do not exist at all. There is no 113th Brigade of Split nor 114th of Sibenik. The same applies to 5th of Zagreb, 109th of Vukovar or, for that matter, to the so-called specialized units like Panthers, Tigers, Black Legions, Jokers, Knights or Lightning, etc.

However, there is a very limited number of the Croatian Army troops in the vicinity of Dubrovnik positioned against the Serb forces and with the only goal of protecting internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Croatia. These troops have been deployed in strict accordance with the agreements signed by the governments of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina on 12 July 1992. Some of these troops, however, do belong to certain units mentioned in the Prime Minister Silajdzic's letter.

There are, however, approximately 1,500 to 2,000 Croatian volunteers fighting in the HVO units. These persons - fighting for the survival of their compatriots and their native land - are mostly of Bosnia-Herzegovinian origin and almost all of them would under different circumstances easily qualify as citizens of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This certainly would in no way

apply to thousands of extreme fundamentalists recruited in different Islamic countries to fight in the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina. My Government considers that the Security Council should look further into this matter and make proper judgement not only as to the number of these armed extremists, but also to the sources of extremely significant arms supplies that have apparently come into their possession.

The Government of Croatia expects and is willing to wait for such an unbiased and objective report that can be used as a basis for evaluation of the validity of Mr. Silajdzic's accusations.

The scope, harshness and particularly the timing of Mr. Silajdzic's grossly unfounded accusations against my Government lead me to believe that the Bosniak-Moslem side is not for the time being willing or ready to accept peace negotiations in good faith, but is merely trying to distract the international public opinion and turn the attention of the relevant international fora away from the substance of issues before us.

Nevertheless, I would like, Your Excellency, to use your good offices to renew my invitation to Mr. Silajdzic to return to the negotiating table even before the new round of Geneva talks scheduled for 10 February and engage in further efforts aimed at finding a viable political solution based on the already agreed to principles and arrangements of the Union of three equal constituent peoples.

In the end, I would like to state that the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudman, has on two occasions requested that complete international control be established over all the borders of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He has also repeatedly called for a complete demilitarisation on the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This remains and will remain the policy of my Government.

(Signed) Dr. Mate GRANIC
Deputy Prime Minister
and the Minister of Foreign Affairs